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Prophecy Continued: Reflections on Innerbiblical Exegesis in the Book of Ezekiel

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Abstract

The argument starts from the observation that the Book of Ezekiel is characterised by a remarkable knowledge of prophetic tradition. This phenomenon has long been explained by the prophet's personal acquaintance with the words of his predecessors. However, the main aim of the following article is to show that the various allusions and thematic linkages have to be understood as examples of innerbiblical exegesis.

For the purpose of discussion, three examples from different literary layers of the book are chosen that serve in illustrating the underlying basic principle, namely Ezek 37:1-14, Ezek 34 and Ezek 36:23b-38. In the course of the textual observations, it shall further be demonstrated that form and technique of innerbiblical exegesis undergo a development within the literary growth of the book. While the oldest texts draw on existing motifs and metaphors, the literary references increase over the following literary layers. Finally, in the youngest texts, literary references to different texts within and beyond the book are assembled and systematised. This development bears witness to changes in the understanding of scripture that was increasingly perceived as authoritative.

Keywords

Book of Ezekiel, innerbiblical exegesis, prophecy, scripture

1. Introduction

The Book of Ezekiel's apparent knowledge of prophetic traditions has long attracted attention. It was Julius Wellhausen who came to the conclusion that the prophet of the book had to be seen as an epigone, who only reflected on the words of his venerable predecessors.¹ This remark demonstrates the high esteem in which the "original word" of the prophets was held. Consequently, scholarship has long been occupied with the question how Ezekiel or his

¹ Cf. J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin/New York, ⁶2001 [⁶1927]), p. 403.

school could have heard of or come into contact with the prophetic word in question.

However, a different approach is called for as theories focusing on the historic prophet and his social environment are unable to account for the complex literary linkages and references that exist between the prophecies of the Book of Ezekiel and other prophetic books. Rather, the prophecies are only existent in the form of literary compositions and should therefore be understood as examples of innerbiblical exegesis. Since the publication of Michael Fishbane's study "Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel",² the importance of innerbiblical exegesis has been widely acknowledged. What remains underestimated is the important role of this phenomenon as part of the literary growth of Old Testament literature. In the case of the Book of Ezekiel, the phenomenon even seems to have a key function as the number of allusions and the range of their variety is most striking. It can be assumed that this profound knowledge reveals a specific theological interest that characterises the book as a whole.

Therefore, the main aim of the following observations is to inquire into the theological interest that can be detected in the exegesis of different texts in the Book of Ezekiel. It will be demonstrated that form and method of innerbiblical interpretation undergo a development within the literary genesis of the book. However, scholarship still disagrees about the question if a literary growth can be assumed and if yes, how this development can be described.³ In my dissertation I have undertaken a literary critical and redaction historical analysis of the salvation prophecies in Ezek 34-39 and argue that the chapters have been composed over a longer period of time.⁴ While the oldest oracles in Ezek

² M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1985).

³ A recent overview of the scholarly discussion offers K.-F. Pohlmann, *Ezechiel: Der Stand der theologischen Diskussion* (Darmstadt, 2008). While German scholarship prefers a literary and redaction critical analysis (cf. e.g. the two-volume commentaries by W. Zimmerli [BK XIII/1 and XIII/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969] or K.-F. Pohlmann [ATD 22/1 and 22/2; Göttingen 1996/2001]), English speaking scholarship takes a rather conservative approach (cf. e.g. the holistic interpretation by M. Greenberg [AncB 22/22A, Garden City/New York, 1997/1983] or by D.I. Block [NICOT; Grand Rapids, 1997/1998]).

⁴ A. Klein, *Schriftauslegung im Ezechielbuch: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Ez 34-39* (BZAW 391; Berlin/New York, 2008).

36:1-11* and 37:1-6* are addressed to the Diaspora using the image of the first Babylonian Gola as a key for the historic situation in Persian times, several reworkings take place that increasingly shape the book as a compendium of prophetic literature and extend into the Hellenistic era.⁵

For the purpose of discussion, it seems useful to choose three examples that stem from different literary layers of Ezek 34-39. These chapters form the third part of the book and their salvation prophecies are addressed to the people, the land and the city. Our starting point will be an analysis of the vision of the dry bones in Ezek 37:1-14, whose basic layer belongs to the oldest texts within these chapters. The second text is the so-called “shepherd chapter” Ezek 34, while the rather late promise of the new covenant in Ezek 36:23bβ-38 will conclude the examples. Finally, the textual observations will allow for some summarising remarks on the function and the importance of innerbiblical exegesis in the Book of Ezekiel.

2. Textual Observations

2.1. *The Vision of the Dry Bones: Ezek 37:1-14*

The vision of the dry bones is one of the best-known texts of the book. As to its redactional position, there is strong evidence to suggest that the vision represents the earliest literary layer in chap. 37 and thus belongs to the oldest texts in Ezek 34-39.⁶ The vision’s basic layer comprises V 1-6*, in which Ezekiel envisions the scattered bones in the valley and is ordered to prophesy their revival by the spirit. V 11-14* form a *Fortschreibung* as the motif of the bones that shall be led from their graves does not match the picture of the scattered bones, while V 2.7-10* represent a later reworking that implements the idea of the resurrection of the dead.⁷ As the original vision takes place “in the middle of the valley” (הבקעה, V 2), where Ezekiel had seen the glory of Yhwh in the exile according to Ezek 3:22-24 (הבקעה, V 22, 23), the prophecy is clearly addressed to the first Gola. As mentioned above, though, the first

⁵ On this see Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 350-406. As a consequence, the oldest edition of the book has to be understood as a pseudepigraphic composition that claims the authority of a prophet named Ezekiel; cf. also K. Schöpfli, *Theologie als Biographie im Ezechielbuch: Ein Beitrag zur Konzeption alttestamentlicher Theologie* (FAT 36; Tübingen, 2002).

⁶ Cf. Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 270-300.

⁷ Cf. Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 270-276.

Gola is a mere cipher and serves to illustrate problems of Second Temple Judaism that was characterised by the separation between those who resided in the land and those who continued to live outside its boundaries. This is exactly the constellation that can be conveyed by using the image of the first exile.

Concerning the motifs in the vision of Ezek 37:1-6*, the promise of salvation is characterised by the opposition of death and life, illustrated with the images of the scattered bones and the reviving spirit. Though the text itself stands rather alone in the Old Testament, the tradition historical background shows that it is nevertheless shaped referring to existing conventions.

Starting with the scattered bones, the bones (עצמות) designate first of all in an anatomic sense the human skeleton, though in the context of wisdom, the bones have come to stand as a synonym for the human person as a whole.⁸ Thus, the disintegration of the bones indicates a state of illness nearing death. In the Book of Ezekiel, two texts use the image as a prophecy of doom: In Ezek 6:5 the Israelites are threatened that their bones (עצמותיכם) shall be scattered around their altars, while in Ezek 24 the burning of the bones (העצמות, 24:5; העצמות, 24:10) in the pot is a metaphor for the judgement on the people of Jerusalem. Furthermore, there is no denying the fact that the image of the bones on the surface of the valley strongly recalls the threat of not being buried. Not only can this threat be found in a number of Old Testament texts (cf. Deut 28:26; Isa 14:19f., 34:3; Jer 7:33; 9:21; 14:16; 16:4, 6; 19:7; 34:17-20; 36:30; Ps 79:2f.), but it is also common in the Ancient Near East.⁹

While the bones impersonate death and doom, the promise of salvation is strongly linked with the giving of the divine spirit. This spirit is clearly understood as a life giving principle which can be demonstrated by the consecutive perfect in Ezek 37:5: "I will cause spirit to enter you so that you will live (והייתם)." The idea of the spirit as a life principle is a coined issue in the Old Testament (cf. e.g. Gen 6:17 and 7:15) and human life is dependant on the

⁸) Cf. K.-M. Beyse, "עצמות", *ThWAT* VI (1989), col. 326-332.

⁹) Cf. e.g. the similar threat in the Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon (425.519) in J.B. Pritchard (ed.), *ANETP* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 538-539.

participation in the divine spirit.¹⁰ Apart from the book of Ezekiel, the promise of the spirit can be found in three other prophetic books; namely Isaiah (cf. Isa 42:1; 44:3f.; 59:21; 63:10f.), Haggai (cf. Hag 2:5) and Joel (cf. Jo 3:1f.).

Apparently, the vision of the scattered bones in Ezek 37 fits well into this tradition historical background, insofar as it combines the idea of the spirit as a life giving principle with the prophetic promise of the spirit. However, the giving of the spirit receives an imagery description in Ezek 37:1-6* and is linked with the metaphor of the scattered bones. Thus, the granting of the spirit is interpreted in terms of re-creation as the bones have been beyond all possibilities of life.

In short, the core of the vision in Ezek 37 is clearly shaped by alluding to existing Old Testament motifs and metaphors that are referred to and transferred into concrete imagery. Though there is no evidence that points to a literary dependency, the vision draws on a number of coined issues that are taken up and reused. What cannot be denied is, however, a correspondence to the doom oracles in the first part of the book, in which the motif of the bones figures as an image of judgement. Concerning the literary composition of the book, the vision of salvation in Ezek 37:1-6* is thus shaped as a counterpart to the oracles of doom in the first part of the book.

2.2. *The Shepherd Chapter: Ezek 34*

The second example is the shepherd chapter in Ezek 34. It seems safe to assume that the chapter belongs to a later literary stage than the vision in Ezek 37:1-6*. The fictional focus is no longer set on the first Gola but on the situation of the people in the land. This betrays a later point of view: The viability of the people no longer takes centre stage but the focus is on the conditions of living in the land.¹¹

Though the question of literary integrity is widely disputed, there is strong evidence to suggest that the original literary layer can be found in Ezek 34:1-10* (V 1f., 5f., 9f.). These verses comprise a judgement oracle directed at the

¹⁰ See O. Kaiser, *Der Gott des Alten Testaments. Wesen und Wirken, Theologie des Alten Testaments, Teil 2: Jahwe, der Gott Israels, Schöpfer der Welt und des Menschen* (Göttingen, 1998), p. 286, and S. Tengström, "רוּחַ, I.-VI.," *ThWAT* VII (1993), col. 385-418, 407-411.

¹¹ On the literary relationship between Ezek 37:1-6* and 34:1-10* see in detail Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 66-78, 320, 350-380.

bad shepherds to whom Yhwh announces that he will rescue his sheep from their hands and put a stop to their shepherding. Mainly because of their divergent use of the shepherd image the promise of the new exodus (V 11-15*), the promise of a Davidic shepherd (V 23f.*), the promise of a covenant of peace (V 25-30) and the oracle of judgement against the sheep (V 17-22) can be identified as later supplementations.¹²

Throughout the Ancient Near East the metaphor of the shepherd and his flock is a common image for the ruler who cares for his people and it is frequently encountered in the Old Testament.¹³ However, with regard to Ezek 34:1-10*, it seems difficult to decide which group of rulers is accused of negligence here. The long accepted interpretation, according to which the pre-exilic kings of Judah are addressed,¹⁴ poses a number of difficulties, as a situation after the catastrophe of 587 B.C. is described (cf. Ezek 33:21f.) and the bad shepherds can hardly be threatened with a judgement that has already taken place. Similarly, retrospection is out of question, as the shepherds are guilty of a present crime; they could fulfil their duty, which, however, they choose to neglect. It seems therefore safe to suggest a group of post-exilic leaders, which could even consist of foreign rulers.¹⁵

¹²) For a detailed analysis of chap. 34 that offers further literary evidence for the proposed redactional layering cf. Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 32-42.

¹³) Cf. V. Hamp, "Das Hirtenmotiv im Alten Testament", in *Festschrift Kardinal Faulhaber* (München, 1949), pp. 7-20; W. Schottroff, "Psalm 23. Zur Methode sozialgeschichtlicher Bibelauslegung", in id. and W. Stegemann (eds.), *Traditionen der Befreiung. Sozialgeschichtliche Bibelauslegungen, Vol. 1: Methodische Zugänge* (München, 1980), pp. 78-113, 86-92; B. Willmes, *Die sogenannte Hirtenallegorie Ez 34* (BET 19; Frankfurt a. M., 1984), pp. 277-350, and R. Hunziker-Rodewald, *Hirt und Herde. Ein Beitrag zum alttestamentlichen Gottesverständnis* (BWANT 155; Stuttgart, 2001), pp. 43-72.

¹⁴) Thus e.g. R. Smend (sen.), *Der Prophet Ezechiel* (KEH 8; Leipzig, ²1880), p. 273; G. Hölscher, *Hesekiel. Der Dichter und das Buch. Eine literarkritische Untersuchung* (BZAW 39; Giessen, 1924), p. 169; L.C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48* (WBC 29; Dallas, 1990), p. 161; D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel. Chapters 25-48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, 1998), p. 282; M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37* (AncB 22A; New York, 1997), pp. 649f., and P.M. Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 482; New York/London, 2007), p. 197.

¹⁵) A group of Israelite post-exilic leaders is presupposed by K.-F. Pohlmann, *Der Prophet Hesekiel (Ezechiel). Kapitel 20-48* (ATD 22/2; Göttingen, 2001), p. 464, while Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 40-42, opts for a group of foreign rulers.

It has long been acknowledged that the shepherd chapter Ezek 34 resembles an oracle of the Book of Jeremiah, namely the judgement on the bad shepherds in Jer 23:1-8.¹⁶ The *nucleus* of this oracle is a woe statement over the bad shepherds supplemented with the reproach that the shepherds had scattered the flock (V 1f.). Further literary continuations include the promise of a new group of shepherds in V 3f., the promise of the Davidic shepherd in V 5f. and the promise of the new exodus in V 7f.¹⁷

Comparing the two texts, the word-to-word linkages are most striking.¹⁸ Though they are by no means confined to the respective basic literary layer, the following observations shall be restricted to Ezek 34:1-10* in order to demonstrate the basic principle at work. Remarkable is firstly the parallel woe statement הוי רעים in Jer 23:1 respectively הוי רעי־ישראל in Ezek 34:2. Secondly, Jer 23:1f. as well as Ezek 34:6 speak of the dispersal of the sheep (פּוֹץ hif., Jer 23:1f.; פּוֹץ ni., Ezek 34:6). Likewise similar is the pronouncement of punishment “against the shepherds” (על־הרעים, Jer 23:2; אֶל־הרעים, Ezek 34:10),¹⁹ which is introduced by the particle לִכֵּן and the messenger formula (cf. Jer 23:2 and Ezek 34:9f.).

The results of this short comparison show clearly that an exegetical relationship between Jer 23:1-8 and Ezek 34:1-10* has to be assumed. Not only do the significant lexical linkages point to that conclusion, but also the striking thematic resemblance. On that assumption, Jer 23 has to be seen as the literary *Vorlage* of Ezek 34:1-10*. In the Book of Jeremiah, the shepherd imagery has previously been used for the kings of Judah (cf. Jer 10:21). Furthermore, Jer 23:1-8 is located at the end of the words against the kings of

¹⁶ Cf. already Smend, *Prophet*, p. 272: “Das Stück ist eine Nachbildung von Jer. 23,1-8”. See further J.W. Miller, *Das Verhältnis Jeremias und Hesekiels sprachlich und theologisch untersucht* (GTB 28; Assen, 1955), p. 106; Zimmerli, *Ezechiel 25-48* (BK XIII/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, ²1979), p. 835, and Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, p. 161.

¹⁷ Cf. Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 44f. Similarly C. Levin, *Die Verheißung des neuen Bundes: In ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Zusammenhang ausgelegt* (FRLANT 137; Göttingen, 1985), pp. 188-190, and W. McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah: Vol. I: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1986), 555-559.

¹⁸ For a complete comparison of the various links between Ezek 34:1-31 and Jer 23:1-8 cf. Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 46-55.

¹⁹ In the book of Ezekiel, אֶל and עַל are used without any notable difference.

Judah (Jer 21:11-23:8). Opposed to that, in the Book of Ezekiel the metaphor is only used in Ezek 34 and singularly in Ezek 37:24, which shows, however, the influence of the shepherd chapter. Hence, the oracle against the bad shepherds seems to have its origin in the Book of Jeremiah and has been transferred from there into the Book of Ezekiel.

Consequently, the question remains as to how this exegesis has taken place. Obviously, the first author of Ezek 34 drew closely on both content and structure of Jer 23. Starting with the message reception formula in Ezek 34:1, he copied the woe statement and the message about the scattering of the flock from Jer 23:1f. in Ezek 34:2, 5f. He thus resorted to a text dealing with a pre-exilic context in order to describe the post-exilic situation in the land and substituted the Judean kings with the post-exilic leaders. However, in comparison to the *Vorlage*, the charges against the shepherds are less severe: While in Jer 23:2, the shepherds are accused of actively dispersing the flock (פִּירָץ hif.), their offences in Ezek 34:2 consist in “tending themselves” (הָיוּ רֹעִים אֹתָם). Their crime is rather the lack of care than an active dispersal of the sheep. That shows that the author of Ezek 34 is less interested in demonstrating the guilt of the leaders than in emphasising the salvatory action of Yhwh who takes over responsibility for his flock.

There is even the possibility that the author of Ezek 34:1-10* already knew the continuation in Jer 23:3f., which would further emphasise the differences: It is not a new group of human shepherds that take responsibility for the neglected sheep (cf. Jer 23:3f.), but the rescue of the flock lies in Yhwh’s hand alone. In this case, the exegesis in Ezek 34:1-10* has a double focus: Yhwh does not only dispose of the bad shepherds of Ezek 34:1f., but the interpretation is also directed at the pre-exilic Judean kings of Jer 23,1f., whose place is taken over by Yhwh; he alone rules over his flock.

The exegetical discussion about who is going to take responsibility for the sheep is retained through the following literary stages of both texts.²⁰ Though the further development cannot be described here, the preceding observations have shed light on the underlying basic principle: The author of Ezek 34 draws

²⁰⁾ For a complete account of the exegetical interpretation cf. Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 49-59.

on the shepherd metaphor derived from Jer 23:1f., 3f. and interprets the literary *Vorlage* in his own prophetic composition.

2.3. *The New Covenant: Ezek 36:23bβ-38*

Turning to the last example of Ezek 36:23bβ-38, one of the latest texts in the book will be investigated. It belongs to a passage that is missing in the Greek Papyrus 967 (Pap. 967) that can be dated to the second or third century C.E. and represents the earliest witness of the pre-hexaplaric Septuagint of Ezekiel. The text as it is preserved in this papyrus attracts attention in more than one respect: Not only does it omit the lengthy passage Ezek 36:23bβ-38, it further shows a different order of chaps. 36-40: Ezek 36 is followed by chaps. 38 and 39, while the vision of the dry bones in Ezek 37 is inserted between Ezek 39 and 40.

Recent studies have demonstrated convincingly that the papyrus has preserved an older edition of the book.²¹ When the chapters came to be arranged according to the Masoretic order, the passage Ezek 36:23bβ-32 was composed as a joint meant to facilitate the rearrangement of the chapters and has later been supplemented by the continuations in V 33-36, 37f.²² However, the assumption that Pap. 967 preserves an older edition of the book than the Masoretic Text has especially been opposed with reference to the manuscript finds from Masada. The findings confirm for the first century B.C.E. at the latest an edition of the book containing Ezek 36:23bβ-38,²³ i.e. a version that dates much earlier than Pap. 967.²⁴ Yet the age of the manuscripts in question should not be confused with the age of the versions that have been transmitted

²¹) Cf. J. Lust, "Ezekiel 36-40 in the Oldest Greek Manuscript", *CBQ* 43 (1981), pp. 517-533; P. SCHWAGMEIER, *Untersuchungen zu Textgeschichte und Entstehung des Ezechielbuches in masoretischer und griechischer Überlieferung* (Ph.D. diss.; University of Zurich, 2004), pp. 180-186, 313-317, and Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 60-65. This view has recently been opposed by Block, *Book of Ezekiel*, p. 341, and Joyce, *Ezekiel*, pp. 205-206.

²²) The clearly confined continuations in Ezek 36:33-36, 37f. supplement information on the restoration of the cities and the population; cf. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel 25-48*, pp. 872f.; Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, pp. 176-178; Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 84-85.

²³) Cf. the edition of MasEzek by S. Talmon, *Masada VI: Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965: Final Reports* (Jerusalem, 1999), 59-75.

²⁴) See e.g. H.M. Patmore, 'The Shorter and Longer Texts of Ezekiel: The Implications of the Manuscript Finds from Masada and Qumran', *JSOT* 32 (2007), 231-242.

by them. This is not to deny that different versions of the same book co-existed (as is demonstrated by the existence of Pap. 967), but the fact that the Masoretic Text of Ezekiel can be explained as a *recension* of the text preserved in Pap. 967 shows that the different versions represent different stages of the literary growth rather than independent editions.²⁵

Beyond the redactional function as a joint piece, the passage Ezek 36:23bβ-32 comprises some of the most central salvation promises in the book: In V 26, Yhwh announces that he will give the people a new heart (לב חדש) and a new spirit (רוח חדשה) within them (בקרבתם) and will remove the stony heart from their bodies, replacing it with a soft heart of flesh. Moreover, he promises to put his own spirit within them so that they will be able to obey his rules and maintain his ordinances (V 27).

Though there is no explicit reference to the term “covenant” (ברית), it is quite clear that this passage is meant to reflect on the question of how the human being has to be constituted if they shall be able to maintain Yhwh’s covenant standards. As will be demonstrated, Ezek 36:26f. provides an answer to the question by drawing on a number of covenant texts not only from the Book of Ezekiel, but also from the Book of Jeremiah. Those passages are systematised and re-interpreted in Ezek 36.

The first literary *Vorlage* are the two covenant texts in Ezek 34:25-30 and 37:25-28 that speak of a covenant of peace (ברית שלום, Ezek 34:25; 37:26). The whole passage in Ezek 36:23bβ-32 contains a number of lexical linkages to both Ezek 34:25-30 and 37:25-28 so that it is clearly shaped as referring to those two covenants.²⁶ However, the more important reference texts within the

²⁵) It has recently been acknowledged that there is no clear-cut separation between the phase of textual editing and the phase of textual transmission. Rather, a transition period has to be assumed, during which different editions of the biblical books co-existed due to the fact that translation processes started before the redactional work came to an end; see in general E. Ulrich, “The Canonical Process, Textual Criticism, and Latter Stages in the Composition of the Bible” in id., *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Leiden and Grand Rapids, 1999 [1992]), pp. 51-78, and E. Tov, “The History and Significance of a Standard Text of the Hebrew Bible”, in: M. Sæbø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation I/1* (Göttingen, 1996), pp. 49-66.

²⁶) Cf. Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 85-98.

book can be found in Ezek 11:19f. and 18:31. While in Ezek 11:19* the giving of one heart (ונתתי להם לב אחד) and the transplant of the stony heart for a heart of flesh is promised (והסרתי לב האבן מבשרם ונתתי להם לב בשר),²⁷ Ezek 18:31 requires the people to make themselves a new heart and a new spirit (ועשו לכם לב חדש ורוח חדשה).

The author of the late promise in Ezek 36 quotes the statement referring to the stony heart from Ezek 11:19f.* in V 26b and places before it the request from Ezek 18:31, which is, however, turned into a promise: “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (ונתתי לכם לב חדש) (ורוח חדשה אתן בקרבכם והסרתי את לב האבן מבשרכם ונתתי לכם לב בשר). Thus, the modified quotation from Ezek 18:31 becomes the interpretation for the following quotation from Ezek 11:19f.* that has come to be understood as a promise of a “new heart”.

Further literary allusions complement the conglomerate in Ezek 36:26f. First of all, the explicit giving of “Yhwh’s” spirit (רוחי) in 36:27 represents an allusion to the literarily preceding promise in Ezek 37:14: “And I shall give you *my* spirit (רוחי) and you will live.” Moreover, the announcement in Ezek 36:26f. is clearly shaped in reference to the promise of the new covenant in Jer 31:31-34. What connects the two texts is the idea that an alteration of the heart constitutes a necessary prerequisite for the human being to maintain the (new) covenant standards. However, while in Jer 31:33 the Torah shall be put in the inward parts (בקרבם) and be written on the heart, in Ezek 36:26f. the spirit of Yhwh shall be put in the inward parts (בקרבכם) and an altogether new heart is promised. Consequently, the announcement in the Book of Ezekiel is to be understood as a development and correction of the idea of the new covenant in the Book of Jeremiah: Apparently, the author was convinced that not only a new use of the heart is required, but also a complete renewal of the human interior.

In short, the late promise in Ezek 36:26f. shows a remarkable technique of innerbiblical exegesis: The texts employed emerge quite clearly in the inter-

²⁷⁾ The promise of a new spirit in V 19aß represents a later supplement that is supposed to adjust the promise to that in 36:26f.; cf. Levin, *Verheißung*, p. 207, and Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 93, 96

pretation. The linkages are arranged in form of set pieces and partly, faithful quotations of whole sentences are found. It can thus be suggested that this manner of exegesis bears witness to a changed understanding of scripture: Scripture was perceived as a variable, which got gradually more clear-cut and was attributed increasingly more authority.

3. Innerbiblical Exegesis in the Book of Ezekiel

The starting point of this contribution was the observation that the Book of Ezekiel is characterised by a remarkable knowledge of prophetic traditions. The three preceding examples could serve in illustrating that this erudition is no evidence for the learned exchange between the historic prophets, but rather the manifestation of a literary phenomenon; that of innerbiblical exegesis.

Furthermore, the three examples could shed light on a development in the technique of innerbiblical interpretation that can be observed in the book as a whole:²⁸ The vision of the dry bones in Ezek 37:1-6* stands for the oldest texts in the book. Though these texts do not have any direct literary *Vorlage*, they nevertheless draw on motifs and metaphors that experience an interpretation in the book. Over the following literary layers, the textual references increase and texts like the shepherd chapter Ezek 34 draw heavily on a single literary *Vorlage*. Finally, in the latest redactional stages, literary references to different texts within and beyond the book are assembled and systematised. The example of Ezek 36:26f. has shown that one could even speak of literary quotations, which are evidence of an increasing understanding of scripture as a fixed authority.

Thus, prophecy in the Book of Ezekiel is to a high degree prophecy continued: Existing prophetic texts are referred to and interpreted in the course of the book.²⁹ Special importance seems to be given to the prophecy of the Book of Jeremiah that is alluded to in different texts. However, the book as a whole seems to be designed as an ideal compendium of prophetic tradition. As such, it both fulfils and concludes Old Testament prophecy.

²⁸) For the prophecies of salvation in Ezek 34-39 see Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 384-388.

²⁹) Though prophetic words take centre stage, texts from other biblical books are also referred to and experience a prophetic interpretation in the book. An example is the exegesis of Lev 26 in Ezek 34:25-30 and Ezek 37:25-28; for further details see Klein, *Schriftauslegung*, pp. 184-190, 387.